

unfortunate incident, or any circumstance of expression or conduct, displeased us in our first meeting with a person, it will be strongly recalled each time that we see him again, if we meet him but seldom; on the contrary, if our intercourse become frequent or habitual, such a first displeasing circumstance, and others subsequent to it, may be forgotten. This observation might be of some use to a man who really wishes to neutralize in his mind the offensive associations with evangelical subjects; as he may be assured that one of the effectual means would be, to make those subjects familiar by often thinking on them.

While remarking on the effect of displeasing images employed to illustrate Christian principles, I cannot help wishing that religious teachers had the good taste to avoid amplifying the metaphors of an undignified order, which may have a kind of coarse fitness for illustration, and are perhaps employed, in a short and transient way, in the Bible. I shall notice only that common one, in which the benefits and pleasures of religion are represented under the image of food. I do not recollect that in the Scriptures this metaphor is ever drawn to a great length. But from the facility of the process, it is not strange that it has been amplified, both in books and discourses, into the most extended parallel descriptions; exhausting the dinner-room of images, and ransacking the language for substantives and adjectives, to stimulate the spiritual palate. The figure is combined with so many terms in our language, that it will unavoidably occur; and the analogy briefly and simply suggested may sometimes assist the thought without lessening the subject. But it is degrading to spiritual ideas to be extensively and systematically transmuted, I might say *cooked*, into sensual ones. The analogy between meaner and more dignified things should never be pursued further than one or two points of obviously useful illustration; for, if it be traced to every particular in which a resemblance can be found, the meaner thing abdicates its humble office of merely indicating some qualities of the great one, and becomes formally its representative and equal. By their being made to touch at all points, the meaner is constituted a scale to measure and to limit the magnitude of the superior, and thus the importance of the one shrinks to the insignificance of the other. It will take some time for a man to recover any